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The Friday Letter

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On the Hill



Both the House and the Senate Agriculture Committees again wrestled with Farm Bill legislation this week.

On September 10, the House Agriculture Committee reported out H.R. 2100--the Food Security Act of 1985. Chairman Kika de la Garza (D-Texas) said he would seek to bring the bill to the House Floor as quickly as possible.

Earlier, Chairman de la Garza named an ad hoc Task Force to recommend where to cut about \$11.4 billion in order to meet the target set forth in the congressional budget resolution (S.Con.Res. 32).

Appointed to the 12-member Task Force were Democratic Representatives Thomas Foley (Washington); Berkley Bedell (Iowa); Leon Panetta (California); Jerry Huckaby (Louisiana); Tony Coelho (California); Thomas Daschle (South Dakota); and Charles Stenholm (Texas).

The Republicans included Representatives James Jeffords (Vermont); Ron Marlenee (Montana); Pat Roberts (Kansas); Bill Emerson (Missouri); and Sid Morrison (Washington).

The Senate Agriculture Committee continues to mark up Farm Bill legislation.

-Bill Tlucek

USDA Prepares for World Food Day

Information plans for USDA's observance of World Food Day, October 16, include providing high-level speakers nationwide for appropriate activities. They also include an exhibit and ceremonies in the

Patio of the Department's Administration Building in Washington, D.C.

Secretary John R. Block will deliver the keynote speech at the morning Patio event, October 16. Other speakers will represent the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Agency for International Development.

The weeklong Patio exhibit is coordinated by the Design Division of USDA's Office of Information with materials from several agencies.

Speakers are available through Joe Bailey of USDA's Office of Public Liaison. His telephone number is (202) 447-2798.

Meanwhile, observance material is available from Pat Young, chair, National Committee on World Food Day, care of FAO, Suite 300, at 1001 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

A commemorative stamp urged by Secretary Block will be issued the day before World Food Day in ceremonies on Capitol Hill.

Secretary Block will be featured on radio public service announcements. Larry Marton, public affairs specialist in the Special Programs Division of USDA's OI, who serves as U.S. governmental information coordinator for World Food Day, will explain the Government's observance on USDA's television show, "A Better Way."

Organization Chart Printed

A revised picture organization chart of top USDA officials has rolled off the press.

The limited-edition form (only 4,000 copies were printed) depicts 77 key Department executives, from Secretary Block to agency administrators.

Copies of the limited-edition poster-size chart are available to agencies through the USDA Central Supply Store. Agencies should submit form AD-14.

A smaller version of the chart will be distributed to all USDA employees in a future issue of "USDA News," the employee newsletter.

Production of the chart was coordinated by Milton Sloane, a public affairs specialist in the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information, assisted by OI's Design and Photography Divisions.

to collect food stamp claims if the pool of tax refund intercept funding is unavailable? (3) Should stricter verification techniques, such as fingerprinting, be used for persons with no fixed address? (4) Does the administrative fraud hearing serve as an effective mechanism for controlling fraud and improving program administration?

The conference was attended by some 225 fraud investigators and other participants.

- John Webster

Officials Address Fraud Conference

At the recent meeting of the newly merged National Welfare Fraud Association in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, conferees heard Assistant Secretary John W. Bode, Administrator Robert E. Leard, and Deputy Administrator Virgil Conrad discuss various topics, including fraud prevention.

During an after dinner speech, Bode reiterated the importance of Operation Awareness and the impact it is having on reducing waste, fraud and abuse in the Food Stamp Program. Bode also discussed the Administration's position with regard to the pending Farm Bill legislation.

At a morning session Leard talked on the Optional Nutrition Assistance Grant as proposed to the Congress by the Administration. He then served as a panelist in an afternoon session in which he emphasized the need to further reduce error rates and improve management of the Food Stamp Program, particularly at the local level.

Conrad also served as one of four panelists in which each was given propositions to address. The four questions presented by the National Welfare Fraud Association asked: (1) Should food stamp recipients be subject to prosecution if they are slightly over the eligibility limit? (2) Regarding sanctions against States for high error rates, should States be forced

Special Nutrition

Nutrition and Technical Services

Controlling Your Weight Without Special Diet Products: If you are trying to control your weight, follow these guidelines:

1. Cut down on high-fat foods such as margarine, butter, highly marbled or fatty meats, and fried foods. Salad dressings, cream sauces, gravies and many whipped dessert toppings are also high in fat.

2. Cut down on sugary foods such as candies; soft drinks and other sugar-sweetened beverages such as ades and punches; jelly, jam, syrups, honey; fruit canned in heavy syrup; pies, cakes and pastries.

3. Cut down on or eliminate alcoholic drinks.

4. Cut down on portion sizes. Portions of some foods, such as meats, are hard to estimate. For example, a 3-ounce serving of cooked lean meat without bone is equivalent to a 3- by 5/8-inch hamburger pattie. What is your usual portion size?

5. Use whole milk or whole-milk products (most cheeses and ice cream) sparingly. Lowfat and skim-milk products, such as ice milk and skim-milk cheeses, provide fewer calories than their whole-milk counterparts.

6. Select cooking methods to help cut calories. Cook foods with little or no added fat and avoid deep-fat fried foods, which are high in calories because of the fat absorbed during cooking. For meat and poultry, trim off visible fat; either broil or roast on a rack. If braised or stewed, drain meat to remove fat. For fish, broil or bake. For vegetables, steam, bake or broil; for an occasional change, stir-fry in a small amount of vegetable oil.

7. Be sure to count the nibbles and drinks enjoyed during social events and throughout the day as part of your day's calorie allotment.

Experienced clinical nutritionists in Nutrition and Technical Services Division have offered to provide free individual weight control counseling for FNS employees. Contact Vicky Urcuyo on 756-3054 to schedule an appointment.

Extension of the National Commodity Processing (NCP) Program: In response to the Congressional directive to encourage processing contained in Public Law 99-88, signed on August 15, 1985, the NCP Program has been extended through June 30, 1986. The NCP Interim Regulations, 7 CFR Part 252, were signed by Assistant Secretary John W. Bode on September 6 and were published on September 12, 1985, in the Federal Register.

Agreement packages for the 1985-86 agreement year were recently mailed to processors, and registered recipient agencies are being notified of the continuation of NCP.

Child Nutrition

National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition: The next meeting of the Council is planned for October 22-24, 1985, at the Days Inn of Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. Two new members whose terms began last January 1 will meet with the Council for the first time--Judy R. Wolfersberger, one of the parent members, and John J. Ward, the school administrator representative. Both Mrs. Wolfersberger and Dr. Ward are from New Jersey.

Management

Civil Rights and EEO

FWP - Specialty Diet Products: The Federal Women's Program sponsored a program on August 28 entitled "Specialty Diet Products - FDA's Perspective." The speaker, Marilyn Stephenson, heightened the audience's awareness to safe and unsafe weight loss methods and gave her listeners criteria by which to judge such products.

Through her job as Assistant to the Director in the Office of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Center for Safety and Applied Nutrition at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), she is aware of the potential hazards of some fad diets. The FDA intervenes only with marketed products when the product constitutes a potential health problem. If a food is promoted to have certain drug or drug-related benefits, FDA will question the food's safety and its efficacy (i.e., ability of that food to cause the desired advertised effect(s)). Among others, some well known products that FDA has investigated are the Cambridge Diet and Herbalife products.

She emphasized that the FDA cannot be our only "watch dog" for potentially harmful foods and drugs. As consumers, we must assume some responsibility for protecting ourselves against expensive, unnecessary and fraudulent diet products. Some points to consider before accepting the safety of special diet products include:

1. Are they based on false theory or scientifically proven evidence?
2. What are the total calories? If less than 800 calories per day, you should consult your doctor.
3. Is it a "crash" diet? Often, we are deceived by a temporary weight loss due to diuretic (water loss) effects of many diet products.
4. Is the diet monotonous (i.e., only fruit or only carbohydrates)? Is it nutritionally balanced with a variety of foods from each of the basic four food groups?

5. What are the claims? "Secret ingredients" or "lose weight overnight" are false claims.

6. How is the product sold? Ask an authoritative source about the reliability of the company.

Many of us look for that magical diet formula, pills and gimmicks that will shed unwanted pounds with little or no effort on our part. Ms. Stephenson pointed out that many of these methods may not be safe or the most permanent way to lose weight.

For information on diet products, call Charity Singletary, FDA, Consumer Affairs Office, Falls Church, Virginia, at 285-2578.

FWP - Your Retirement Money: On Wednesday, September 11, the Federal Women's Program sponsored a session entitled "Your Retirement Money." Edna Alford, an Employee Relations Specialist in Personnel Division, addressed a group of 33 employees and explained the changes in the retirement system. She also discussed how your retirement money is made available upon your retirement, disability, separation from the Federal government, or death. Following her presentation, she addressed a variety of questions from the audience.

This session was one in a series of programs presented by the FWP on topics of interest to all FNS employees. Ms. Alford prepared a handout, "Retirement Benefits under the Civil Service Retirement Law," which was provided to all attendees. This document and other informational pieces are available from Ms. Alford in Room 805, POC. Karen Coffman was the FWP Coordinator for the program.

Washington Area News

Picnic '85: The U.S. Army's Cameron Station in Alexandria, Virginia, was the site of the Food and Nutrition Service Picnic '85.

Ninety-five degree heat and threatening thunderheads on the second Sunday in September didn't hold anyone back. When the Howard Cosell of FNS--Jerry Boling--took charge of the bull horn, the beginning of the first FNS Olympics was a moment to remember. That moment saw raw eggs flying through the air, a classic three-legged race featuring entrants with two heads and four arms, as well as a water bucket race.

There was to have been a pie eating contest, but the diet-conscious picnic crowd preferred to save room for the gourmet items being prepared by head chef Larry Rana and his assistants, Virgil Conrad and Sam Bauer. Near the grill the question was: "Did well-done better describe the chefs or the burgers?"

With a bull horn in hand, Alberto Osterling, (Jean's favorite auctioneer), brought the FNS Silent Auction to life. Items donated by FNS employees were open to bids from the audience. There were several moments to remember as picnickers bought up sailboat rides, fishing trips, arts and crafts, gourmet dinners and a long list of specialities.

By evening's end, Picnic '85 had passed. Cameron Station had returned to normalcy and the parking lot was nearly empty. Was a lone figure wandering the park recalling memorable moments or looking for lost car keys?

- Larry Rana

Personnel News

Ed Morawetz Joins Staff: On September 1, Ed Morawetz joined Child Nutrition Division and is working in the Child Care and Summer Programs Section. We believe that his work experience with the Office of Analysis and Evaluation, as well as in the Midwest Region, will be most helpful in his new endeavors. Welcome aboard, Ed!

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the following vacant positions. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you're interested in a Headquarters position, apply to the Employment Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexan-

dria, Virginia 22302. Apply directly to Headquarters office for all GS-14 and 15 positions. For Regional positions, apply directly to the Regional Office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or you can get copies from the appropriate Regional or Headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

Job Title	Series	Grade	Closing Date	Vacancy Number	Organizational Unit
*Secretary Typing	318	GS-3/4/5	09/17/85	85-66	PED
Computer Programmer Analyst	334	GS-9/11	09/30/85	85-67	IRMD
**Copying/Duplicating Equipment Operator (Temporary NTE 1 year)	350	GS-2	09/18/85	85-68	ASD
**Clerk Typist	322	GS-2/3/4	until filled	85-69	PED
***Supervisory Food Program Specialist (Temporary NTE 1 year)	120	GS-13	09/26/85	85-70	NTSD
**Management Analyst (Temporary NTE 1 year)	343	GS-9	09/26/85	85-71	PED
*FNS Headquarters-wide					
**FNS-Local Commuting Area					
***FNS Nationwide					

PED - Personnel Division
 IRMD - Information Resources Management Division
 ASD - Administrative Services Division
 NTSD - Nutrition and Technical Services Division

